



Connecticut Farm Bureau Association

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Testimony Re: Senate Bill No. 450

AN ACT CONCERNING ENERGY CONSERVATION AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

Submitted by: Henry N. Talmage, Executive Director, Connecticut Farm Bureau Association

The following testimony is submitted on behalf of the Connecticut Farm Bureau, a statewide nonprofit membership organization of over 5,000 families dedicated to farming and the future of Connecticut agriculture.

Senator Fonfara, Representative Nardello, Members of the Energy and Technology Committee,

The Connecticut Farm Bureau applauds the many aspects of this bill that expand renewable energy source generation and encourages both energy conservation and renewable development. We also applaud this legislature's actions last session that established a pilot program to assist in the development of anaerobic digestion facilities to generate electricity and heat.

On farm energy, whether it is wind, solar, or anaerobic digestion, is an untapped energy resource in our state that still faces significant barriers for development.

We encourage you to amend SB 450 to remove some of the barriers to on farm renewable energy development.

As you are well aware, renewable energy projects require significant investment, and investors have no interest without some assurances of the success of the project. Massachusetts and other states have been successful in promoting on farm energy by removing such barriers and by permitting agricultural net metering for example. As you are aware, farmers in Connecticut have farms that cross roads, can be in more than one town, or stretch longer than one meter will allow. Under current rules, energy that is produced on a barn on one side of the road cannot be credited to the energy used on the other side. Energy produced on a solar panel on a barn on the sunny side of the farm cannot be credited to energy needed on shady side of the farm if the meters are too far apart. Frankly, these policies make no sense. Energy is one of the highest inputs in agriculture, to allow us to use our resource to produce renewables, be self sustaining, and sell our excess would go far in this state's goal of expanding renewables.

Thank you for your consideration on this testimony.